

COUNCIL

Agenda # \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING OF April 27, 2004



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Discussion and Direction on the Belmont Shuttle Feasibility Study**

Honorable Mayor and City Council:

#### **Summary**

The City of Belmont retained a consultant (Nelson/Nygaard) to assess the feasibility of establishing a community shuttle service in the City. The consultant is also working with SamTrans to develop their long-range transit plan. Through public outreach, stakeholder interviews, field assessment, and research, the study sought to answer several questions about the mobility needs and the transit climate in the City.

City staff is requesting City Council to provide direction on the next steps to be taken regarding the implementation of a community shuttle service.

#### **Background and Discussion**

The Redevelopment Agency funded a study to assess the feasibility of establishing a community shuttle service in the City. The Executive Summary is an attachment to this report and a copy of the complete study is available in the City Clerk's office. The study was also to serve as a mechanism to apply for potential Regional, State and Federal grants to fund the shuttle service.

The El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue corridors currently have good levels of public transit service. This includes access to frequent rail (Caltrain) and bus (SamTrans) service. There are many parts of the City, particularly the residential areas south of Ralston and west of Alameda de las Pulgas that do not have easy access to transit service. This forces residents to be dependent on the automobile, biking or walking for means of mobility.

SamTrans mainline bus service along El Camino Real is likely to increase in the coming years. However, local bus service is likely to experience some reductions in service levels in coming years as SamTrans tries to improve its efficiency and restructures services from less productive to more productive uses. Such a service change would have a positive impact on the need for a local shuttle system in Belmont.

### **Potential Markets:**

The consultant identified seven potential markets for local shuttle service based on their public outreach efforts. They are:

- Notre Dame de Namur University
- Davis Drive Employees
- Residents in the Carlmont, Continental and Davey Glen areas
- Other Belmont residents commuting to/from the Belmont Caltrain station
- Seniors needing transportation for medical trips and local shopping
- Island Park residents and employees commuting to/from the Caltrain station
- Carlmont High School students

### **Service Options:**

The consultant developed nine service options to address the needs of the seven viable markets and they were consolidated into five-shuttle service types based on the target market and the time of service. The five service types are outlined in the Executive Summary.

### **Recommended Plan:**

The recommended service plan focuses on providing an AM/PM commute service to and from the Caltrain station on a fixed route. The routes would travel primarily along Ralston Avenue between the Caltrain station and Davis Drive with a segment that travels through the high density residential area south of Ralston Avenue and west of Alameda de las Pulgas in the Carlmont area.

If successful, the shuttle program could be expanded by adding a midday service designed to bring seniors to the train station, Chope Hospital, Hillsdale Mall and downtown San Mateo. The midday service would function in a demand response mode, picking up and dropping off seniors in Belmont at their residence.

### **Funding Strategy:**

The estimated annual cost for service and the capital costs is approximately \$570,000. The following outlines various funding strategies to support the proposed shuttle service:

C/CAG Shuttle Operations Grant:	\$200,000/ year
Transportation for Clean Air (TFCA) Grant:	\$100,000/ year
Parcel Tax for Shuttle (\$21+ per parcel)	\$ 270,000/ year

The Parcel Tax for the shuttle does not seem to be a viable option. Therefore, the maximum amount of grants that City may receive is approximately \$300,000 per year. This would mean the City would have to find an additional \$270,000 per year to fund a shuttle program.

Other funding sources that may be used are General Funds and Measure A funds. City Council is cutting General Fund related activities as the result of the current fiscal situation. The City needs all the Measure A funds that are available to fund the pavement resurfacing and other related projects. It does not appear to be financially feasible to fund a shuttle system with these funds taking into consideration the City's current financial situation.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of the City Council reviewing and providing City staff direction.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the establishment of a shuttle program be postponed until a guaranteed funding source(s) can be found to offset the cost of the service.

### **Alternatives**

1. Deny the request.
2. Refer back to staff for additional information.

### **Attachments**

1. Executive Summary

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond E. Davis, III, P.E., PTOE  
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